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Marty Stout

## **Stout defeats Dodd to become new Howard Co. GOP chairman**

### **Craig Dunn ends 10 years of local party leadership**

**By George Myers and Rob Burgess  
Kokomo Tribune**

In a closed caucus meeting Saturday morning, Marty Stout was elected as the new Howard County Republican Party chairman by a group of precinct and vice-precinct committeemen at the county's Republican Party headquarters in downtown Kokomo.

Stout defeated Jack Dodd, a previous Kokomo mayoral candidate, to become the local party's new chair, effective immediately. He replaces Craig Dunn, who presided over the local party for 10 years and oversaw a Republican sweep of contested races in last November's election.

In an interview after the results were announced, Stout highlighted the "great" turnout of party officials Saturday and thanked Dunn, Dodd and outgoing Vice Chair Judy Buck for their service to the party.

With all positions open, the party also elected Jamie Shepherd as vice chairman, Greg Lake as secretary and Jon Hendricks as treasurer.

Stout, now operating as the face of local Republicans, spent much of the discussion looking forward on his nascent term as party chair.

"I'm very excited to get started, and the team that we put together has a lot of experience, a lot of enthusiasm to help solidify our direction to where we want to go, with regard to just building on our successes from the last local, state and national election," he said.

While Stout underlined the possible need for increased efficiency in "back office" operations and the importance of building and enhancing party fundraising, he was clear about his intentions to build off many of Dunn's philosophies.

"The thing that we're definitely going to keep the same is Dunn's ability to understand what was needed in each election cycle to win," he said. "What I mean by that is, we are going to keep that flexibility and adaptability and Craig's willingness to make the changes necessary as the party evolved and those campaigns evolved."

One thing Stout would like to see amplified is the party's outreach to a wider set of demographics. A similar point was made by Dodd when he announced that he was running for party chair last month.

"In my comments this morning to the precinct people, I said that we must build a bigger table and invite people to sit at that table with us," he said. "I know our team ... know there are people out there on the fringes that want to be included and want to be involved, and we certainly are going to reach out to them and get them to the table."

Stout is a 1984 graduate of Kokomo High School and a 1988 graduate of Saint Meinrad College, where he earned his BA degree in philosophy, according a press release distributed when Stout announced he would seek the party chair on Jan. 26.

In 2001, he earned his MBA at Indiana Technical Institute in Fort Wayne. Currently he is the business manager for Stout Funeral Homes and Crematory and works part-time as the operations manager for Saint Patrick Catholic Church.

Stout and his wife, Beverly, have been married for 24 years, and they have two daughters, Katelyn, who attends Marian University in Indianapolis, and Reagan, who attends Holy Cross College in South Bend.

In contrast to the Republicans, the Howard County Democratic Party on Saturday kept its leadership positions unchanged, moving forward with

Kathy Skiles as party chair, Steve Geiselman as vice chair, Dara Johnson as secretary and Ed Foster as treasurer.

In a phone interview Saturday, Dunn said he was satisfied with the election process.

"I was real pleased and excited that I think we've got a good team on board to continue the work of the party. We come out of our election united," said Dunn. "It's real positive going into the future. I'm very hopeful about the new team."

Dunn said after a decade in the post, he plans to spend more time writing for Howey Politics and other outlets in addition to working for the party both locally and across the state.

"It's kind of a bittersweet thing," he said. "I've got a lot of great memories from my time doing it. I had a lot of fun. I got a lot of things accomplished. There's some things that I've yet to do that I want to get accomplished, and some projects that I'm working on. So, I'm going to have plenty of things to keep me busy. It's not like I'm going away and not coming back. ... It'll give me an opportunity to kind of focus my extra-curricular time."